

# **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 Community Involvement Plan**

St. Regis Paper Co. Superfund Site  
Cass Lake, Minnesota  
November 2005 Update

## Site Location

The St. Regis Paper Co. Superfund site is in Cass Lake, Minn., on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation adjacent to Chippewa National Forest. The site is composed of three general areas:

- the former operations area bounded by the BNSF Railway Co. tracks to the north, Pike Bay and the channel between Pike Bay and Cass Lake to the east, South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to the south, and Minnesota Highway 371 to the west
- the southwest operational area north of Fox Creek, east of the Tribal Fishery, south of South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and west of County Road 147
- a portion of the City of Cass Lake city dump north of Fox Creek, east of County Road 147, south of Chippewa National Forest and west of Pike Bay.

## Site Background

### History

The St. Regis Corp. began operating a wood preserving facility in 1957. The land was leased from Great Northern Railroad, which became part of Burlington Northern Railroad in a merger. The site expanded through land purchased south of the leased property. Between 1957 and 1975, wood-treating operations generated liquids and sludge that were disposed of in on-site wastewater disposal ponds or the former city dump pit in the City Dump and Fox Creek area and reported in other areas near the site.

In 1984, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency conducted sediment sampling in the St. Regis site area and found polychlorinated biphenyls—commonly called PCBs—in the channel area and Pike Bay. That year, the site was placed on the federal National Priorities List, which is a list of the most serious uncontrolled hazardous waste sites identified for possible long-term remedial action under Superfund.

In January 1985, Champion International Corp. assumed ownership of the site when it acquired and merged with the St. Regis Corp. In September, the company ceased operations at the site.

In 1986, Champion and the MPCA signed two Minnesota Enforcement Decision Documents, based on consent orders signed by both parties, for site cleanup. During 1986-87, Champion performed actions to comply with conditions specified in these Consent Orders. The actions included excavating contaminated sludge pits and visibly contaminated soil from operations areas and the Cass Lake city dump and depositing this waste into a RCRA vault constructed at the former southwest operations area. An extraction system was also constructed to remove ground water contamination from the former operations area and the city dump area. This contaminated water is then treated with activated carbon and discharged to the nearby channel connecting Cass Lake with Pike Bay.

In 1988, Champion deeded a large part of the north storage and residential area to the City of Cass Lake. A portion of the southwest area and fishery was transferred to the Leech Lake Reservation Business committee to expand fish hatchery facilities.

In April 1995, MPCA completed a five-year review of the remedial actions carried out at the site. The review showed that some of the remedial actions may not have been adequate and further action was needed to ensure protection of human health and the environment. International Paper acquired Champion Paper in 2000.

EPA completed a second five-year review in 2000 that also concluded that soil sampling and other testing were needed to determine the protectiveness of the remedial actions conducted in the 1980's.

In 2001, initial sampling was conducted by EPA in response to recommendations made by the 1995 and 2000 five-year reviews. This sampling revealed contamination in site and nearby soils greater than human health and ecological screening levels and high enough to warrant a more detailed evaluation.

During 2003, detailed sampling of the former operations area confirmed the presence of contaminants in the soil above the human health removal action level. Under EPA supervision, International Paper excavated soil during 2004 as a removal action under a Unilateral Administrative Order issued December 17, 2003. Additional on-site soil removal actions are planned.

IP, under EPA supervision, conducted sampling in support of human health and ecological risk assessments under a UAO issued August 11, 2004. In October, 2005, an Interim Record of Decision was issued by EPA for remedial actions in and around homes located near the Site based on results from the risk assessment. The actions called for removal and replacement of carpet, house cleaning for contaminated dust, yard cover, and dust suppression on the nearby dirt roads. Additional actions may be necessary based on the results of the risk assessments. These actions would be carried out under a Final Record of Decision.

## Known Contaminants

The wood treating process at the St. Regis site resulted in the introduction or creation of contaminants hazardous or potentially hazardous to human health and the environment. These contaminants included dioxin, semivolatile organic compounds and heavy metals.

- **Dioxin** has been identified in soil samples in the former operations areas of the site in concentrations up to 7.16 parts per billion. The 1998 EPA Directive for addressing dioxin in soil lists 1 ppb as the starting point for setting removal action levels. Dioxin has been characterized by EPA as likely to be cancer causing in people. Effects specifically observed in people include changes in markers of early development and hormone levels. At much higher doses, dioxins can cause a serious skin disease in humans called chloracne. The ecological impacts of dioxin contamination include causing death, cancer, birth defects and other reproduction problems, genetic defects, tissue damage and immune system damage. Dioxin can kill fish, earthworms, birds, amphibians and other animals. Dioxin can also impair reproduction, cause organ damage and retard growth in mammals.
- SVOC's (chemicals that turn to vapor at about 68 degrees Fahrenheit), including benzo(a)pyrene and pentachlorophenol, have been found in the soil and sediment of the St. Regis site in concentrations that may be a risk to human health and the environment. Sampling found up to 23 milligrams per kilogram—only a small fraction of an ounce—of pentachlorophenol in soil at the former southwest operations area; up to 1.9 mg/kg in soil of residential properties adjacent to the site; and up to 13 mg/kg in sediment of the Fox Creek/Cass Lake/Pike Bay ecosystem. Effects on people from exposure to pentachlorophenol include damage to the central nervous system, cardiovascular system, respiratory system, liver and kidneys. The ecological effects from pentachlorophenol include death, reproductive impairment, organ damage and retarded growth. In birds the effects include death and liver tissue damage.
- Metals, including arsenic and copper, have been found in soil and sediment of the St. Regis site in concentrations that may pose an ecological risk. Up to 15 mg/kg of arsenic was found in soil and up to 523 mg/kg of copper was found in the sediment of the Fox Creek/Cass Lake/Pike Bay ecosystem. Potential ecological effects from copper contamination include death in amphibians, high toxicity in aquatic organisms, reduced growth and developmental abnormalities in birds and liver damage and kidney and brain necrosis in mammals.

Much of the contamination was removed from the site during MPCA-directed remedial actions and subsequent removal actions. However, additional remedial actions may be necessary after an evaluation of the risk assessments, due Fall 2005.

## Community Involvement: Duties and Responsibilities

1. Update Office of Public Affairs website and repository information, as needed: Office of Public Affairs

Website: EPA will maintain, and regularly update its St. Regis website. The web site contains information about activities and meetings, fact sheets, news releases, orders, work plans, sampling plans and technical documents. The web site will, to the extent possible, link to related sites. Otherwise, related web sites will refer users to additional sources of information.

Repository: EPA will maintain and regularly update repositories as listed below. The repositories will contain Administrative Records, enforcement information and other information about activities and meetings, fact sheets and news releases.

2. Develop fact sheets of upcoming events, as needed: OPA with Remedial Project manager assistance

EPA will develop fact sheets pertaining to public meetings and to coincide with site activities. EPA will distribute them in a timely manner to the community through local news media and the City of Cass Lake utility mailings and its mailing lists supplemented with sign-ins at public meetings.

The City of Cass Lake has volunteered to include fact sheets and other site-related information with its monthly utility bills. Because bills are mailed the last week of each month, any information to included should be at the City Clerk's office by the Friday preceding the last week. The city can accommodate up to five sheets of 8-1/2 X 11 inch standard weight stationary.

3. Meet periodically with HOME and other community groups: OPA and RPM

EPA will meet with local groups on request, but generally whenever a public meeting or field activities are scheduled.

4. Identify and periodically visit residents: OPA and RPM

The EPA RPM will identify residents who may require specific information about site activities.

5. Periodically meet with Leech Lake Band Reservation Tribal Council to discuss site progress and issues of specific concern to tribal elected leaders: RPM, Superfund Division Tribal Coordinator with Minnesota Indian Environmental Liaison.

6. Periodically meet with municipal, county and state health departments to review site progress and discuss health advisories (soil, fish, etc.) and community outreach concerning health issues: RPM with OPA assistance

7. Periodically meet with City of Cass Lake to discuss site progress, zoning, institutional controls and public outreach: RPM with OPA assistance

8. Identify minorities in community outreach activities and encourage their participation: OPA with RPM assistance

9. Solicit recipients and fund Technical Assistance Grant: OPA with RPM assistance

## **Open Office Hours**

EPA will hold open office hours, when practicable, at a site and times that will be publicized. Open office hours may be carried out as availability sessions. These open hours will give the public an opportunity to meet with the EPA remedial project manager and community involvement coordinator as well as other federal, tribal and state personnel. Community members will be able to ask questions, make suggestions and express concerns about the project. EPA may hold open office hours in smaller venues, such as the EPA office at Cass Lake.

## **EPA Presence and Contacts**

EPA's Community Involvement Coordinators and Remedial Project Manager will respond to inquiries from those interested in the site. They will also be available to speak to local groups on request. EPA's toll-free telephone number and direct numbers and e-mail addresses will be included on community involvement material.

## **Information Repositories**

U.S. EPA Records Center  
7th Floor  
77 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, Ill. (by appointment)

Cass Lake City Clerk's Office  
332 Second Street NW  
Cass Lake

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe  
Division of Resource Management  
6530 Highway 2 NW  
Cass Lake

[Cass Lake and Bemidji State libraries offered to accept and make available CDs with St. Regis information. Cass Lake Library does not have public access computers with CD capability. Bemidji State library has computers available, but has time limitations. Both offered to lend CDs by checkout to patrons. Three copies of CDs should be provided to each library.]

Cass Lake Library  
223 Cedar Ave  
Cass Lake

Bemidji State University Library  
509 America Ave NW  
Bemidji

## **Government Entities**

EPA will meet with government officials from communities that surround the site. One way for EPA to achieve this is to notify each community about EPA's willingness to present information and to answer questions about the site at tribal council meetings or city council meetings. These presentations will give all local officials an opportunity to learn about the site and EPA activities and ask EPA questions.

## **U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry**

ATSDR, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, is directed by congressional mandate to perform specific functions concerning the effect on public health of hazardous substances in the environment. These functions include assessments of waste sites, consultations concerning specific hazardous substances, surveillance and registries, applied research in support of public health assessments, information development and dissemination and education and training concerning hazardous substances.

Contacts:

Mark Johnson  
ATSDR

77 West Jackson Blvd.(ATSDR-4J)  
Chicago, IL 60604  
(312)353-3436  
johnson.mark@epa.gov

Clayton Koher  
ATSDR  
77 West Jackson Blvd. (ATSDR-4J)  
Chicago, IL 60604  
(312)353-6086  
koher.clayton@epa.gov

## **Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe**

The federally recognized Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe has an enlisted enrollment of nearly 7,200 members with about 3,700 living on the Leech Lake-Cass Lake Reservation. The reservation, totaling 602,889 acres, was established by the treaties of February 22, 1855, and May 1, 1867, and augmented by executive orders. The reservation lies within parts of Beltrami, Cass, Hubbard and Itasca counties. The reservation is governed by a five-member tribal council. Officers serve four-year staggered terms and include a chairman, secretary/treasurer, and representatives from two districts. In addition to business and services, the tribe has its own Department of Resource management that is responsible for monitoring environmental protection for the reservation.

## **Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal Council**

Elections are held annually in June

Chair George Goggleye Jr.  
Secretary-Treasurer Arthur LaRose  
Executive Director Leonard Fineday  
District 1 Burton Wilson  
District 2 Lyman Losh  
District 3 Donald Finn

Contact:

Shirley Nordrum, Environmental Director  
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe  
6530 U.S. 2 N.W.  
Cass Lake, MN. 56633  
(218) 335-7417  
(218) 335-7430 (fax)  
shirley@lldrm.org

## **Minnesota Department of Health**

As the state's leading agency on health issues, MDH responsibilities include monitoring disease trends and detecting and investigating disease outbreaks, researching causes of illness, including cancer, operating programs to prevent diseases from occurring and evaluating potential health hazards in the environment.

121 East Seventh Place  
P.O. Box 64975, Suite 220  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975  
(651) 215-5800

**Contacts:**

Rita Messing (651) 215-0924  
Tannie Eshenaur (651) 215-0916  
Daniel Pena (651) 215-0774

**Minnesota Pollution Control Agency**

MPCA was founded in 1967 to protect the state's environment through monitoring environmental quality and enforcing environmental regulations. MPCA comprises three divisions: Regional Environmental Management Division, Environmental Outcomes Division, and Majors and Remediation Division. The Majors and Remediation Division runs regulatory programs to address air emissions, water discharges and hazardous waste generated by larger businesses and municipalities. Most cleanup programs are administered through this division.

**Contact:**

Susan Johnson, Project Leader  
525 S. Lake Avenue  
Suite 400  
Duluth, MN 55802  
(218) 725-7762  
(218) 723-4727 (fax)  
[susan.johnson@pca.state.mn.us](mailto:susan.johnson@pca.state.mn.us)

**City of Cass Lake**

Cass Lake is in Cass County and situated within the Leech Lake Indian Reservation. It has a land area of 1.1 square miles. Based on 2000 census data, the population is about 860 with about 430 families; the median resident age is 28.4 years; median household income, \$20,583, and median house value of \$32,700. The population comprises American Indian, 69.4 percent; white non-Hispanic, 29.7 percent; two or more races, 5.2 percent, and Hispanic, 1.7 percent. The city government is composed of a mayor and four elected council members.

Administration offices (mayor, city clerk)  
332 Second Street NW  
Cass Lake, MN 56633  
(218) 335-2238

Elaine Fleming, Mayor  
Renee Eckerly, City Clerk  
Eleanor Kirkpatrick, Council Member  
Richard Molash, Council Member  
Ila Senn, Council Member  
Rene Wright, Council Member

The Cass Lake City Council meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month. It holds a council meeting at 5:30 p.m., Cass Lake Municipal Center. The session is open to the public.

**Federal Elected Officials**

Norm Coleman  
U.S. Senator  
2250 University Ave. West  
St. Paul, MN 55114

Mark Dayton  
U.S. Senator  
Federal Building, Suite 298  
Fort Snelling, MN 55111

James L. Oberstar  
U.S. House of Representatives  
515 West First St., Room 231  
Duluth, MN 55802

### **Cass Lake-area News Media**

Cass Lake Times  
128 2nd St NW  
Cass Lake, MN 56633  
(218) 335-2290

Pioneer & Advertiser  
1320 Neilson Ave SE  
Bemidji, MN 56601  
(218) 751-3740

Red Lake Nation News  
P.O. Box 176  
Rd Lake, MN 56671  
(218) 679-3561

Forum Of Fargo  
1320 Neilson Ave SE  
Bemidji, MN 56601  
(218) 751-3740

American/Blackduck Shopper  
25 Main St NW  
Blackduck, MN 56630  
(218) 835-4211

Farmers Publishing Co  
102 N Main Ave  
Bagley, MN 56621  
(218) 694-6265

Co-Pilot Shopper  
408 Minnesota Ave  
Walker, MN 56484  
(218) 547-1008

Pilot Independent  
408 Minnesota Ave  
Walker, MN 56484  
(218) 547-1000

Leader-Record Office  
Main St  
Clearbrook, MN 56634  
(218) 776-3665



Northwoods Press  
108 Main St  
Nevis, MN 56467  
(218) 652-3475

Park Newspaper Of Minnesota  
Bemidji, MN 56601  
(218) 751-5716

Minnesota Public Radio  
405-1/2 Beltrami Ave SE  
Bemidji, MN 56601  
(218) 751-8864

KCCW Television  
Hackensack, MN  
(218) 675-6115

ICTV  
724 NW Conifer Dr  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
(218) 326-3286

KAWB  
RR 2 Box 279d  
Pequot Lakes, MN 56472  
(218) 746-3134

Lakeland Public TV  
422 NW 3rd St  
Brainerd, MN

KKBJ  
2115 Washington Ave S  
Bemidji, MN 56601  
(218) 444-1037

Mix 103.7  
2115 Washington Ave SE  
Bemidji, MN 56601  
(218) 751-7777

R P Broadcasting Inc  
2115 Washington Ave SE  
Bemidji, MN 56601  
(218) 751-5950

Real Country 98  
2115 Washington Ave E  
Bemidji, MN 56601  
(218) 751-7777

WBJI  
2115 Washington Ave SE  
Bemidji, MN 56601

(218) 444-9254

KQ  
1025thStN  
Walker, MN  
(218) 547-4000

KLLZ  
Highway 34W  
Walker, MN  
(218) 751-3421

KCRB/ KNBJ  
405-<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Beltrami Ave SE  
Bemidji, MN 56601  
(218) 751-8864

KBLP/KKZY  
502 Beltrami Ave NW  
Bemidji, MN 56601  
(218) 751-4120

KDKK  
Highway 34 E  
Park Rapids, MN 56470  
(218) 732-3306

KPRM  
Highway34E  
Park Rapids, MN 56470  
(218) 732-3306

KXKK  
Highway 34 E  
Park Rapids, MN 56470  
(218) 732-3306

KAXE  
1841 E Highway 169  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
(218) 326-1234

KGPZ  
504 NW 1st Ave #290  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
(218) 327-3339

KMFY/KOZY  
507SE11thSt  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
(218) 326-0307